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Date: March 2, 2004

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Gov. Blanco Receives Transition Education Policy Council Recommendations

BATON ROUGE, La. – Gov. Kathleen Blanco’s Transition Education Policy Council presented the governor with far-ranging policy recommendations for Louisiana public education today at a meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence.

The Council’s co-chairs -- Superintendent of Education Cecil J. Picard and Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie – made the presentation.

“Recent progress and improvement in Louisiana’s public education system, Pre-K through 16, has been significant,” Picard said. “Much of that is success is the result of the partnership that has developed between elementary and secondary education and higher education leaders. We believe the recommendations we’re submitting today will build upon the successful programs and policies that we have already begun.”

“The enterprises of elementary and secondary education and postsecondary education are so interdependent that we are effectively *one* enterprise,” Savoie said. “It’s simple: We educate the teachers who teach our elementary and secondary students, and those students in turn become the students we teach at our colleges and universities. Our progress in recent years is largely the result of embracing that interdependency. The Council’s report recognizes that interdependency as well, and plots a course that will strengthen this partnership.”

The Council’s report details dozens of potential strategies, including:

- Continuing to provide and expand early learning opportunities for every child in Louisiana and guarantee every at risk child a spot in LA 4, Louisiana’s high-quality, Pre-K program;
- Continuing to improve teacher preparation, induction and continuing professional development and teacher pay to ensure a highly-qualified teacher in every classroom;

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- Reducing the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students through targeting efforts and resources and improving coordination among state supported programs;
- Strengthening Louisiana's accountability program and focusing on improving low-performing schools;
- Improving high school completion rates and making available skill-building activities that target potential dropouts;
- Increasing participation of Louisiana residents in post-secondary education and job training and insuring affordable universities and community and technical colleges;
- Investing post-secondary dollars strategically by continuing to implement the Board of Regent's Master Plan. Continuing to develop the Louisiana Community and Technical College System;
- Matching worker training programs to existing and projected workforce needs and improving coordination among related agencies;
- Targeting low-income workers and out-of-school youth with skill building educational opportunities to enhance earning capacity
- Coordinating adult literacy programs to more effectively provide skills needed for success in the workplace;
- Expanding computer access for school children and implementing a 7th grade computer program; and
- Developing a strategy to address facility maintenance, modernization and technology needs at postsecondary institutions.

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